

# FITNESS

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## Promoting Physical Activity Through Trails

Trails have been built and maintained in this country for transportation and recreation. Rarely, however, have people asked how important these trails are to our health and whether they should be accessible resources to multiple types of recreational users.

There is strong scientific evidence that regular physical activity promotes health and reduces risk of premature death and many chronic diseases. It is recommended that adults get a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) on most, if not all, days of the week.

### The health benefits of using trails are significant

- Regular physical activity is a key component of weight loss. Using trails can directly impact our nation's **obesity** epidemic by encouraging people to become more physically active while exploring the great outdoors.
- Participating in aerobic training significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Trails provide the opportunity for individuals to control **hypertension** (high blood pressure).
- Moderate physical activity such as walking and cycling on trails can protect against developing **non-insulin dependent diabetes**.
- Aerobic exercise training, such as walking and cycling on trails can improve symptoms of **mild-to-moderate depression and anxiety** with effectiveness levels comparable to some pharmacological agents.
- Studies have reported that walking two or more miles a day reduces the chance of **premature death** by 50%.

### Information to locate walking trails:

1. To learn more about South Carolina trails visit [www.sctrails.net/trails/](http://www.sctrails.net/trails/)
2. To learn more about national trails visit the American Hiking Society at [www.americanhiking.org/infocenter/index.html](http://www.americanhiking.org/infocenter/index.html)

